History Of The

Pioneer Evangelical Lutheran Church

of

Argo Township

Brookings County

1884 —— 1959

Compiled by
Donald Dean Parker, History Department
South Dakota State College

Dedication and Preface

This history is dedicated to the pioneer homesteaders of Danish ancestry who felt the need of worshiping their God in their new home, just as they did in their homeland, and who therefore organized themselves into a Christian church and built for themselves and their posterity a place where they could worship according to their Evangelical Lutheran upbringing.

When the suggestion of writing a history of the Danish church was first mentioned at the 75th anniversary celebration on September 27, 1959, it was intended that only a brief account would be given, for it was believed that very little information was readily available.

However, as the writing was later planned, the author felt that a much broader interpretation of the whole history should be given by placing this particular church in the midst of the religious and secular movements which brought about the establishment of Danish churches in South Dakota and western Minnesota. The result is this somewhat extended account.

March 30, 1960
Brookings, S.D.

Dr. Donald Dean Parker, Head
Dept. of History, S.D. State College

Table of Contents

	Pages
Dedication and Preface, Table of Contents	
The Danes of South Dakota	1-11
History of the Church	12-17
Recollections	17-27
Original Members	27, 36-38
Cemetery Inscriptions	28
1880 Census Data of Danes	29-31
Diamond Lake Church	32-34
Hans Christofferson	35-36
Later Church Members	36-38
The Haden Family	39-43
Miscellaneous Notes	44
Map Showing the Homesteads of Pioneer Members	

THE DANES OF SOUTH DAKOTA

The Danes who founded the Pioneer Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argo Township in northeastern Brookings County were part of the great immigration of their countrymen who settled in South Dakota and other parts of the United States in the last century. Prof. Thomas Peter Christensen has written of the Danes who settled in this region and several statements of his are worth quoting.

"There are five groups of Scandinavians - Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, Finns, and Icelanders. All of these...except the Icelanders have extensive settlements in the State of South Dakota. The number of Scandinavians in the United States...is close to five millions. In South Dakota there are over a hundred thousand or between one-fifth and one-sixth of the total population. More than one-half of the Scandinavians in South Dakota are Norwegians, nearly one-fourth are Swedes, nearly one-sixth are Danes, and nearly one-twenty-fifth Finns.

"Danish immigration to the United States is a part of the great North-European migration of the nineteenth century which reached its highest peaks in the eighties and early nineties. It was during the seventies, eighties, and early nineties that Danish immigration to South Dakota was heaviest. In 1870 there were only 115 Danish immigrants in Dakota Territory. At the close of the century there were about five thousand and about six thousand in 1920. The total number of Danish stock in 1920 was fifteen thousand.

"Danish immigration to Dakota was either direct from Denmark or indirect from other states of the Union, especially from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois. While a considerable number of the immigrants were unmarried men a larger number of those who came out there in the seventies and eighties were young and middle aged couples anxious to become landowners and home-builders. They might not have a great deal of property, but scarcely any of them were destitute. A large number of the families had enough money to start farming on homesteads, pre-empted or privately owned land.

"Practically all of the adult immigrants had received an elementary education - thanks partially to the compulsory school law of Denmark passed already in 1814 - and some had benefited by a measure of secondary schooling (in the so-called folk high schools), but only in exceptional cases had any of them received a higher education. Generally the Danish newcomer was, when he 'roll-

ed into' Dakota in prairie schooner, on railroad train, or on foot, in good health, energetic, and ambitious. Weaklings, paupers, and the criminally inclined were not attracted to the Danish settlements.

"Possibly the first Dane to arrive in Dakota Territory was Peter Larsen Christiansen who came in 1864, three years after the Territory was organized. In a few months he was joined by six other Danes. They settled in the southeastern part of the Territory in the vicinity of Swan Lake, Turner County. Of the 115 Danes in Dakota in 1870 all except eleven lived in this settlement embracing parts of Clay and Yankton counties. Here the influx of Danish settlers was rapid after the launching of the Dakota boom.... The census of 1880 shows that only Clay, Yankton, and Turner counties had more than a hundred Danes each - Turner leading with a total of 401, nearly twice as many as in any other.

"The Swan Lake settlement was thus at that time the largest Danish settlement in Dakota - and still is - as well as one of the largest in the United States. .... So well was Danish established as a community language that even some Americans spoke it....while the people spoke a species of Danish it was really a curious mixture of Danish and English necessitating a knowledge of both to understand it. Outwardly the settlement had a Danish appearance for stone fences might be seen there and some of the buildings had been constructed of fieldstones and neatly thatched, all in good old Danish fashion.

"These ministers also noticed that pioneering had told on the character of the people, who had been accustomed to live in more compact groups in Denmark. Though attracted by the beauty of gently rolling Dakota landscapes, the pretty lakes, the glory of the rising and setting sun on the prairies, the loneliness and hard work - often unrequited toil - had made them serious minded, even gloomy. Then too, religious contentions had thrown their shadows across the life of many a home, deepening the gloom of the economic struggles. But signs of better times were not wanting. Though most of the settlers in the later eighties were still poor, these ministers also speak of several Daneville farmers as well-to-do. The building of several churches at this time in the settlement is also strong indication of a rising tide of prosperity broken though it was by the drought of the early nineties.

"The settlement was too large for only one social center and several centers sprang up almost simultaneously with Daneville, one at Lodi, others at Spring Valley, Turkey Valley, temporarily also at Sunnyside and Alsen; and

later at Gayville and Irene. Some of these were formed in part by migrations from the mother settlement.

"The second largest Danish settlement (or group of settlements) was located in Hamlin and Kingsbury counties. Here the Danish settlers were among the earliest pioneers, settling on homesteads in the vicinity of the lakes, Albert, Poinsett, and Thisted. The largest Danish immigration occurred between 1877 and 1882. Among the settlers are mentioned Lars Christensen, Jorgen (George) Dam, Andrew Johnson, (Andreas Jensen?), Lars Madsen, P.C. Poulsen, and Christian Nielsen.

"Most of the Danes who settled in the northern and eastern part of this settlement came from the district Thy (formerly a shire or county name) in the northwestern part of the peninsula Jutland, Denmark. The Thyboer are a sturdy, thrifty farmer folk speaking a dialect differing not a little from the national Danish. So loyal have these people been to home traditions that this dialect is now spoken by the grandchildren of the Danish pioneers in addition to national Danish and English.

"The original social center of this settlement was Maple Grove located on the shores of Lake Thisted where Peter Christensen built a store before 1879. The lake was named Thisted by the Thyboer in memory of the chief town of Thy. Later the settlement was named Denmark and a post office by that name was located by the crossroads near the center of the settlement. There the people also secured 40 acres for a church farm, built a parsonage and a meeting house, near which finally in 1910 a fine church appeared, one of the most pretentious Danish church buildings in South Dakota. Another church had been built earlier by the Thyboer living to the north near Bryant, Hamlin County. Both congregations were Lutheran.

"Farther west in Kingsbury County, Danish immigrants from Jutland, Funen (Fyn), and Seeland (Sjaelland) began to locate on homesteads in the early eighties. Here the earliest Danish settler appears to have been Mr. Thomas Sorensen who homesteaded three miles east of Erwin in 1881. Mr. Sorensen had heard much about the Woolly West and for this reason he arrived in Dakota with a revolver in the hip pocket. However, he soon found that people in Dakota were more bent on building than destroying. Being a carpenter by trade he readily found profitable work which enabled him to start out farming on his homestead under more auspicious circumstances than most other Danish pioneers.

"In the nineties special efforts were made by the people to bring in more settlers and a considerable amount of land held for speculation by Eastern people were disposed of to Danes. Unfortunately these were in too many instances bachelors and prospective brides were scarce. Many a young Danish immigrant had to send and more frequently travel the long way back to Denmark to obtain a life companion. To be sure there were also young women among the Danish immigrants, but they preferred the states farther east where it was easier to find suitable employment in the towns.

"Before 1880 there were Danes in most of the counties south of the present boundary between North and South Dakota. In the eighties and nineties larger groups collected near Dell Rapids...Millard...Pukwana...Beresford...Conde... Howard...Henry...Colman...Ethan...and a few other places. Frequently the churches played an important role in the establishing of new settlements for the planting of churches and settlements often went hand in hand. Both Baptists and Lutherans were especially active in the formation of settlements, but it was by private rather than by organized efforts that this was done.

"Interesting groups of a branch of Lutherans called Grundtvigians settled near Ethan and Howard. The Grundtvigians are very ardent nationalists to whom paradise is but little more delectable than an idealized Denmark. The Grundtvigians at both of these places early had a rich and varied social life evidenced by their interest in libraries and lectures on secular subjects. To the Ethan settlement, however, Grundtvigianism proved something of disruptive force since many of the first settlers removed to Tyler, Minnesota, when a Danish folk high school was built there in 1888. Tyler thereby became one of the Grundtvigian strongholds in the United States. Other Danish settlements in Dakota where there were Grundtvigians were similiarly affected.

"The general economic development of the Danish settlements was not essentially different from that of other rural communities in South Dakota. The Danish pioneers homesteaded, preempted or purchased privately owned land on which they built sod houses or dugouts, soon to be replaced by little wooden structures, sometimes partly built of home-made bricks.

"At first the settlers drove oxen, then horses. Many a Danish pioneer had an almost insatiable land hunger and would keep on adding quarters and even sections to his original homestead until he became a 'land lord' in the widest sense of the term. It was a common saying among Danish-Americans that

while Danish farmers elsewhere owned land by the acres, in South Dakota they owned it by quarters and sections. Near the turn of the century, Mr. Peter Aggergaard in the Viborg settlement is said to have owned 25 sections of the most fertile land in the State.

"To the newly arrived immigrant from Denmark, American labor saving machinery was a constant source of wonder and admiration. It convinced him at once that the Yankees were indeed very ingenious fellows. So the Danish pioneer usually had no silly objections to the introduction of improved farm machinery and better methods of cultivation. In fact he was likely to be among the first in the community to change from grain farming to more diversified farming of stock-raising and dairying. The latter appealed especially to the first generation because it tended 'to kill the worry about store bills' but less to the second generation to whom it meant extra chores since the cows had to be milked twice a day even on Sundays.

"The Danish immigrants loved to improve Dakota landscapes by planting groves, and these were seldom wanting around their homesteads. Much loving care, too, was not infrequently bestowed on gardens by both the men and the women. (The Reverend L. Henningsen while pastor of the congregation at Denmark (Badger) laid his flower garden out like the map of the mother country Denmark.) Unfortunately this was at times a hopeless fight against weeds and drought. ....

"Besides his land hunger, the Danish immigrant had another strong passion, that of preaching. Frequently farming and preaching went hand in hand. The opportunities for religious leadership afforded by the missionary activities of such American churches as the Adventist, the Baptist, and the Methodist were eagerly seized; and many of the Danish immigrants who had mostly been Lutherans in the mother country, at least nominally, joined these churches. Most converts were made by the Adventists and the Baptists, but enough became Methodists to form a strong and permanent congregation at Swan Lake. The cross currents of the activities of these churches were criss-crossed by their encounters with the Free-Frees, a dissenting emotional type of Lutherans, and later with the regular Lutherans. ....

"Both within and without the Daneville settlement the Lutherans competed with the non-Lutheran churches and the dissenting Free-Frees. This warfare created a bitterness which frequently made neighborliness precarious. Then,

too, regular Lutherans themselves had dissensions within their ranks, especially a dispute concerning the nature of the Bible about which one faction, the Inner Mission People (Indre Missions-folkene), held that the Bible was the infallible Word of God; whereas the other faction, the Grundtvigians, adhered to the contention that the Bible was a collection of writings about God's dealings with the Chosen People and about early Christianity. To them the Apostolic Creed rather than the Bible was the infallible Word of God, a doctrine which conservative Lutherans considered very un-Lutheran teaching. On this issue the Danish Lutheran churches in the United States split in the early nineties into two church associations or synods, the Inner Mission People organizing as the United Church and the Grundtvigians as the Danish Church. In many instances the local churches also split and organized separately. ....

"In 1916 the Inner Mission People had congregations at Viborg, Irene, Turkey Valley, Gayville, Beresford, and Greenville. .... Grundtvigian congregations were found at Argo, Denmark, Erwin, Viborg, Wilmot, Lake City and Howard. ....

"The Methodists have a strong congregation at Viborg....it does not use Danish in its church services. Neither does the Adventist congregation at Swan Lake. .... The Baptists...have been untiring in their missionary efforts among the Danish immigrants in South Dakota and in this work they have been the most successful among the non-Lutheran churches. In 1921 their congregations were found at Viborg, Dell Rapids, Spring Valley, Turkey Valley, Millard, and Conde, Spink County. ....

"Being a part spiritually of the mother church of Denmark the Lutherans have adhered more closely to Danish church forms and Danish language than any of the non-Lutheran churches. With the Lutherans both church and Sunday school work have until recently been conducted quite exclusively in Danish. It was largely through the maintenance of Saturday and vacation schools that this continued to be possible. .... No such schools were ever established in South Dakota, but a considerable number of Dakota young people attended the Danish schools for adults at Tyler, Minnesota; Blair, Nebraska, and Des Moines, Iowa.

"Whether Lutheran or non-Lutheran the churches became the center of a much-needed social life, especially needed in the pioneer days when loneliness

was one of the great drawbacks to life on the Dakota prairies. Besides the strictly religious activities church life afforded means and opportunities for outings and gatherings of a secular character. This was particularly true among the Grundtvigians. While church life had objectionable features in the fierce contentions of the pioneer churches, such antagonisms in time mellowed until now the recollections of them tend to provoke smiles rather than frowns.

"Besides churches the Danes in South Dakota also organized locals of the large Danish fraternal society, the Danish Brotherhood, which was patterned after the American secret societies. The growth of the Brotherhood was retarded in the eighties and nineties by an aftermath of political Anti-Masonry in the Danish churches. As the opposition decreased, locals were established at various places in the state, the first appearing at Denmark in 1886. Later locals also made their appearance at White, Viborg, Henry, Hetland, Irene, Wilmot, Pierre, Williston, Colman, Howard and Dell Rapids.

"The Members of the Brotherhood have the benefits of weekly sick aid and life insurance at low rates. The Brotherhood also provides much in a social way such as picnics, dances, entertainments, and libraries, originally consisting of Danish books. ....

"The various churches encouraged their young people to organize. These organizations with the exception of the Grundtvigian have been of a strictly religious character. The Grundtvigian young people's societies also promoted interest in gymnastics, folk-dancing, singing, dramatics, and libraries.

"The different churches, too, had their ladies aid societies organized along lines similar to the American ladies aid.... A secular type of Danish women societies were the locals of the Danish Sisterhood, an organization for women similar to the Brotherhood. The interests of the Danish immigrant women were also promoted by Kvinden of Hjemmet (Woman and Home), a monthly of secular contents published at Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for Danish and Norwegian women in the United States.

"Generally the Danish immigrants were good homemakers. Rarely was the immigrant woman's ideal a career outside of the home, but usually it was that of the devoted mother and the efficient housewife. .... Most of the Danish women were good cooks and in their new homes they continued to make Danish meals, soups, preserves, pastry, and homemade beer (not intoxicating) without which life to them and their households seemed unbearable. By-interests of

the women might be reading, often it was knitting and fancy work in which many acquired superior skill.

"In the matter of caring for new arrivals in the Danish pioneer homes, Americanization at once made itself felt. 'The new citizen of the world' (den nye Verdensborger) was not bound in swaddling clothes according to old country custom but was permitted to kick in loose dresses in more democratic American fashion. The immigrant mother, however, usually nursed her babies and taught them to speak the Danish mother tongue. So faithful were many parents in this respect that there are today grandchildren of the Danish pioneers who speak Danish as well if not better than their grandparents. And this has been accomplished without neglecting the English. .... The cultivation of a double nationalism thus meant extra work, but occasionally it also meant an extra holiday for the Fifth of June, the Danish Constitution Day, was sometimes celebrated in the larger Danish settlements.

"The rapidity with which Scandinavians become Americanized is often a matter for favorable comment. The Scandinavian immigrant learns English quickly, becomes naturalized, votes, and sends his children to the public school. To this the Danish immigrant is no exception. But he has never been much attracted by American politics which to him too often seems a compromise with right and honor. Accordingly he has looked upon officeholding as a duty more than a privilege. This duty had to be done in school districts and townships largely inhabited by Danes. But a considerable number of South Dakota Danes have also held county and state offices.

"The South Dakota Danes became both Republicans and Democrats. Many were infatuated with Populism in the heyday of its power, and radical tendencies nurtured by Den Danske Pioneer, a widely read Danish weekly published in Omaha, Nebraska, have been discernible among them since pioneer days. ....

"Teaching has proved an attractive career to many Dakota Danes of both sexes. .... It is not therefore a mere incident that two of the best known Danes in South Dakota are professors at the State College in Brookings. Professor N.E. Hansen has been connected with this institution since 1895 and Professor Christian Larsen since 1907."

(Copied from "The Danes in South Dakota," by Thomas P. Christensen, printed in the South Dakota Historical Collections, volume XIV (1928), pages 539-551, where a bibliography also appears. Christensen was born in 1880 near Ulsted, Denmark.)

Further information about the Danes in South Dakota was compiled by Prof. John P. Johansen, formerly of State College. In 1937 he wrote:

"During the early part of the 1870's, the Danes laid the foundation for one of the largest settlements of this nationality in the United States. It is located in...Turner county. Slightly later, other Danish settlements were established in Kingsbury, Moody, and Brookings counties. From 1870 to 1880 this nationality...increased from 115 to 1,447; and 1,298 of these were located in counties which later became a part of South Dakota. .... Among Danish immigrants, the establishing of settlements and the founding of churches went hand in hand. The Danish Baptist congregations appear to have been founded somewhat earlier than the Lutheran ones. Four denominations were active...the Lutheran, the Baptist, the Methodist, and the Adventist. This denominational rivalry caused considerable bitterness and strife. Moreover, in 1893 the Danish Lutheran congregations were divided in affiliation between two contending synodical bodies. ....

"The Danish Lutheran congregations and churches in South Dakota are affiliated with two separate synodical bodies; namely, the Danish Evangelical Lutheran church, whose principal educational institution and seminary is located at Des Moines, Iowa, and the United Danish Lutheran church, which maintains a college and seminary at Blair, Nebraska. The formation of this first mentioned synod dates from 1872. It included, at first, the several divisions of the Danish church 'Hojkirkelige', 'Grundtvigianere', and 'Indre Mission'. The first group were High-Church Lutherans; the second group were followers of N.F.S. Grundtvig, the renowned Danish clergyman, poet, and educator; and the last mentioned inner mission people represented a pietistic religious lay movement. In the early 1890's differences of opinion became more strongly emphasized between the three groups than before, and a group of 19 pastors and 37 congregations withdrew from the original church body in 1894. Somewhat later this body united with the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Association to form the United Danish Lutheran Church in America. It appears that the churches of the seceding group have carried forward the inner mission heritage while the congregations of the older Danish church have represented the national heritage of Grundtvig which especially finds expression in the folk school movement. In the congregations of this church, the Danish language is more preserved than in the congregations of the other synod.

"The congregations of the 'United Church' are located...in the south eastern corner of the state. Those which affiliated with the 'Danish Church' are located at Viborg in Turner county, Gayville in Yankton county, White in Brookings county, Denmark, Badger and Erwin in Kingsbury county, at Howard in Miner county, and Lake City in Marshall county. The membership and strength of these congregations are shown in the accompanying table.The stronger churches of both synods date from 1875. The last one to be organized dates from 1923. The Lutheran congregations have not been as much subject to disbandment as those of the Baptist denomination."

	Danish Ev. Lutheran Church				United Danish Evang. Lutheran			
	1935-36	1926	1916	1906	1935-36	1926	1916	1906
Congregations	4	7	6	6	6	7	7	7
Adult Members	340	574	615	417	532	552	383	444
Average Adult Membership per congregation	85	82	103	70	89	79	55	63

"The Danish Brotherhood in America was organized by representatives from certain Danish immigrant societies in Omaha in 1882. The organization consists of a supreme lodge governing the local lodges, 8 of which are now active in South Dakota.

"The objects of the Danish Brotherhood and the general nature of its business according to its Articles of Incorporation are 'to strengthen its members in fidelity to the constitution and laws of the United States; to render aid to its members and those dependent upon them in the event of sickness, disability or death, and to generally conduct its affairs as a fraternal benefit society ...; and also to aid its members in securing employment and furnishing to them such other brotherly help and assistance as the by-laws...shall prescribe.'

"The financial activities of the Danish Brotherhood concern life insurance, burial aid, aid on account of sickness or old age dependency, and aid and support on account of its social functions in the communities. These include general social gatherings, amateur dramatic performances, dances, picnics, and the like. The Danish brotherhoods are not church sponsored organizations. In fact, at the outset, they met strong opposition from the more conservative pietistic Lutheran clergymen and congregations. Nevertheless, the lodges made rapid gains in membership in general and also in South Dakota. Emigration from Den-

mark favored their growth. Since 1920 several factors have made for a decrease in membership. The decline and stoppage of immigration, first on account of quota legislation, and later because of the depression, meant that that source of members was stopped. It was especially the financial and economic hardships of the depression of 1930-35 which reduced the premium paying membership. In 1919 the brotherhood found it necessary to re-organize its insurance according to actuarial principles, which meant that some of the older members dropped out. In 1920 one of the South Dakota lodges alone had more active members than the present state total."

Brotherhood lodges still in existence on January 1, 1936, together with their date of organization and 1936 membership, were the following: Badger, 1886, 35; White, S.D., Feb. 24, 1898, 15; Henry, 1900, 10; Viborg, 1900, 118; Irene, 1901, 16; Pierre, 1906, 15; Lynn, Colman, 1907, 40; Howard, 1912, 9.

"The Danish Sisterhood in America is the corresponding society for women of Danish nativity or descent. .... There are two units of this organization in South Dakota; one at Viborg, and one at Irene."

(Copied from "Immigrant Settlements and Social Organization in South Dakota," by John P. Johansen, bulletin 313, June 1937, of the Department of Rural Sociology, South Dakota State College, Brookings, S.D.; pages 17-22.)

Some statistics taken from the 1890 census are of interest. South Dakota then had 4,369 persons who were born in Denmark; Minnesota has 14,133. Of the 4,369, Brookings County had 169; Kingsbury, 366; Hamlin, 105; Deuel, 32; Codington, 38. Next to Kingsbury, Turner, Yankton, and Clay counties had the largest numbers. Lincoln County in Minnesota had 613 Danes, being exceeded by only three other counties in that state, all in the eastern part.

In 1890 South Dakota had 6,853 persons with both parents born in Denmark; Minnesota had 22,359. In 1890 South Dakota had 2,540 native whites with both parents born in Denmark; Minnesota had 7,441.

There were 131 organizations in the "Danish Church in America," 11 of which were in South Dakota and 17 in Minnesota. The 11 had 285 members and only 1 church edifice. The 17 had 1,032 members and 8 church edifices.

Of the 11 in South Dakota the only ones nearby were 3 in Kingsbury County, the 3 having a total of 100 members. Brookings County was not mentioned. The state had 1,589 church organizations, of which 46 were in Brookings County.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The church record book of the Pioneer Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argo Township states that the Danish families of the area met on July 5, 1884 with Lauritz C. Haden to organize a congregation. Rev. Hans Christofferson, a Norwegian, was asked to be present and he attended, though he lived ten miles toward the southwest, a mile north of Brookings.

The meeting opened with scripture reading and a song, after which the organization of a congregation was discussed. All were willing and they selected the name "Argo Danish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation" (Argos Danske Evangelish Luthers Menighed) in Brookings County.

This meeting was evidently held at, not in, Mr. Haden's house, for it was summer time, the house would not have held them all, and quite a large number of people were evidently present. The Hadens lived two miles east of the present church. The original members included 17 men without wives or families, 9 with wives, and 14 with families. This totals at least 40 men, and we can assume that the wives and children must have numbered another 40 or so.

Among the 40 men, whose full names are given elsewhere, were Nelsons, Jensons, Mortensens, Petersons, Nielsons, Rishois, Christensens, and a scattering of other names. (See pages 36 and 37 for some corrections to the figures above

At the same meeting on July 5, 1884, the following officers were elected: Lauritz Haden, president (formand); Soren Knudtson, vice president (vise formand); Peter and Anders Nelson, treasurers (kaserere); Anthon Peterson, secretary (sekretor); Lauritz Haden and Jens Nelson, auditors (forstandere).

The first recorded annual meeting was that of December 5, 1885, opened by Mr. Haden with scripture and a hymn. Reports were made and officers were elected. The records state that the services were held in private homes during the winter. They were having Rev. Hans Christofferson preach to them, probably once a month, for which in 1885 they paid him $42. They also paid $1.75 for books. They had $44.50 in their treasury and, after these two accounts were paid, they had only $0.75 left. Truly it was a time of small beginnings.

At this first annual meeting on December 5, 1885, a committee of three men Peter Nelson, Lauritz Haden, and Jens Nielson, was appointed to draw up a constitution to be ready by the first Tuesday of January 1886. This was done, a

on January 5, 1886, at 1:00 P.M., after Mr. Haden had opened the meeting with the usual scripture reading and hymn, the constitution was adopted. It consisted of 30 paragraphs and is found in Danish on pages 7-11 of the record book. This remained the constitution of the congregation until about two decades ago when the constitution of the Senate was adopted in its place. This was about the same time that a hymnbook with English hymns was put into use in place of the Danish hymnal. It reflected the beginning of a change from Danish to English in the language used in the service.

The annual meetings were always held in December, usually about the middle of the month, until 1947. On December 14, 1947 it was voted to hold the meeting a month earlier "on account of the weather," which would make it the second Tuesday in November. The last November meeting was held on November 13, 1951, when it was agreed that the meeting should be moved forward to the second Tuesday of October, which has been the customary time since then. Semi-annual meetings have been held since 1953, usually about the middle of April. Occasional special meetings have been held, usually in the earlier years.

At the meeting of December 11, 1888 there was discussion about trying to rent 20 acres of land on which the members would plant and harvest a crop, turning the proceeds over to the church to begin to raise money for a church building. This was not done until 1889, but the amount of land rented or crop raised, together with its value, were not recorded.

At the meeting of December 9, 1890 it was agreed that each family was to give to the church the income from an average acre of flax, the sum to be paid within the coming year. By this time in 1890, three men had paid in $5 each and one $10. These four were young men recently arrived in the community.

On December 8, 1891 several men offered to donate land for a church building. These were Peder Neilsen Bok, Anthon Peterson, Jens Nelson, Thomas Petersen, and Peter Nelson. At a special meeting on June 20, 1892 a vote was taken and seven voted to accept Jens Nelson's offer, while five voted for A.M. Petersen's. It was decided that the church edifice and a cemetery should be on the same lot, and a committee of seven was appointed to handle the affair. Eight days later, at a special meeting, it was decided that the church should be placed on the south third of the lot, while the cemetery occupied the north two-thirds. This was further agreed to on December 13, 1893. This is as it is today. The land was to be 50 rods from the southwest corner of the southwest quarter of section 33 of Argo township (49-112-33). Thus, the land is on a

beautiful hilltop overlooking two fertile valleys. It was slightly to the south of the center of the Danish community of the 1890s. The lot was to be 30 rods north and south and 16 rods east and west, as at present. The same committee was continued in office.

A map of the cemetery was made at the meeting of December 13, 1893. Grave family lots were not to cost more than $4, and single lots not more than $1.

At a special meeting on July 11, 1895, eleven years after the organization of the church, it was decided to start to build the edifice by having each of eleven men haul three to six loads of field stones picked up on their farms to build the foundation of the church. Presumably, 47 loads of stones were thus hauled to the site.

At the meeting of December 8, 1896 it was first stated how much each family could give toward the building fund. During 1897 the building went on, but at the annual meeting of December 14, 1897 it was reported that they were running short of money and an attempt was made to borrow some among themselves rather than to try to get some from a loan company with its well-known high interest rates.

At a meeting on June 3, 1898 it was evident that the work of building was still going on, and there was some discussion about getting a Danish minister, perhaps in conjunction with the Diamond Lake Danish Lutheran Church, several miles north of Lake Benton in Lincoln County, Minnesota. Rev. Hans Christofferson was still serving the church and he continued to do so for several years.

A half year later, on December 14, 1898, it was decided that a formal gateway should be built as an entrance into the cemetery. P. J. Petersen was to do the blacksmith work and Rev. Hans Christofferson, who like the Master whom he served was a skilled carpenter, was to do the carpentry. This gateway stood for many years until, in the interest of progress and transportation, it was torn down.

At the same meeting, after all bills were paid, the treasurer had only $10.31. They needed about $150 to finish building the church and efforts were being made to borrow it. It seems that meetings were still being held at the homes of the members, but it was decided that in the summer of 1899 services would be held on the first and third Sundays of each month. Evidently church services had not been held weekly prior to this time. Even before the church edifice was completely finished, services began to be held in it.

If the length of time taken to build the church edifice seems unduly long it should be remembered that the decade of the 1890s was a difficult one for South Dakotans. The year of statehood, 1889, had seen drought, crop failures, and many leaving the state; 1890 saw poor crops but 1891 saw bumper crops, followed in 1892 by good crops and prices. In 1893 the financial panic began, followed by poor crops in 1894. Farming methods began to change to adapt to existing soil and financial conditions. In 1895 there were good crops but poor prices, and 1896 was much the same. Better times set in in 1897, and by 1900, when the state's population was 401,000, debts began to be wiped out.

This decade, too, saw the schism within the Danish churches, but of this the church records are silent so far as the Argo Danish church is concerned.

On December 12, 1899, it was decided that each man should give the income from an acre of grain or flax, or its equivalent. Attempts to secure a Danish minister had not yet been successful. At a special meeting on February 11, 1900 it was decided to employ Pastor N.P. Hald of Diamond Lake for one year. He had been serving the Diamond Lake Church from August 1896 and was to end his pastorate there in April 1900. However, affairs did not work out as planned, for on August 19, 1900 a special meeting was held to invite Rev. J. Jensen Mylund to come as their pastor, but he did not accept the invitation. Still other attempts were made in 1900 and 1901, no less than four special meetings being held for this purpose in 1901.

On June 4, 1902 it was decided that the church should try to secure Rev. N. Henningsen to come to preach to them regularly. He had been serving the Diamond Lake Church since March 1, 1902, and now agreed to hear the Macedonian call to go westward about 14 miles into Argo township. Later, at the annual meeting it was voted to give him a $40 Christmas gift. This custom was kept up, as a rule, with succeeding pastors.

On April 9, 1903 it was voted to employ Pastor Henningsen for another year, though his salary is not stated. At this time there was difficulty in collecting money and letters were sent to those who were behind in their payments.

Rev. N. Henningsen apparently continued to serve the church after his connection with the Diamond Lake Church ended on May 1, 1905. It is possible that church services were held more frequently during this time, perhaps even every Sunday, though the church records are silent on this subject.

In the years that followed, the church often shared pastors with the Dia-

mond Lake Church. Among these were Johannes Jensen, about 1906 to 1910; Aage Møller, 1910 to 1914; Straks Nielsen, 1914 to 1918; Henrik Plambeck, June 1918 to November 1924; Thorvald Kjaer, 1925 to 1928; K. Jensen Hansen, 1929 to 1936; and others since then.

The Diamond Jubilee issue of the White Leader, June 18, 1959, has a list of pastors who served the Argo church, though the dates are not always in agreement with those given above. After 1936 the pastors are given as R. Jensen, 1936 to 1942; H. Strandskov, 1942 to 1943; Eilert Nielsen, 1943 to 1950; Walter Brown, 1951 to 1954; and John Enselman, the present pastor, who also serves a church in eastern Kingsbury County.

Interesting accounts of some of these pastors may be found in a book published by Mathias Andersen at Lake Benton, Minnesota, in or about 1942. It is entitled "Menigheden i Diamond Lake." Copies may be obtained from Iver C. Andersen, Route 2, Box 47, Lake Benton, Minn.

The church records continued to be kept in the Danish language until December 10, 1946 when this sentence appears: "The reason for changing the church record book to the American language is because of the younger generation."

At this time, 1946, the net balance of the church was $855.48. The sum of $40 was given to the synod budget. "It was also approved that we have services twice a month and that we pay Rev. Eilert Nielsen $15.00 for each service. It was also approved that we give Rev. Nielsen and Mrs. Nielsen $50.00 bonus for the past year." A committee was appointed to get and decorate a Christmas tree. This was a custom of long standing, one still continued to the present. All were to go forward and present a gift to the pastor and his wife. Maurice, the janitor, was to receive a dollar each time he started a fire. It was agreed that a new stove and piano should be bought.

On November 8, 1949 it was voted to install electric lights in the church if the R.E.A at Colman would run the line to the church. A year later the electric lights had still not been installed, though they were shortly thereafter. It was also voted that the pastor's wife should be given a bonus of $50 for playing the piano during the year 1949. A farewell party was to be given for the Nielsens in the basement of the Lutheran church in White, 5½ miles toward the southeast.

In 1951 an annex was built on the south side of the church. This was wel-

comed by all, for it provided more room for Sunday school classes as well as kitchen and dining room space and a place for social and other meetings. After this addition was built the Sunday school showed new life and attendance, with quite a number of children enrolled.

In 1954, at the time the church celebrated its 70th anniversary, it had 52 confirmed members, 85 baptized members, 38 voting members, and 20 contributing members. Those who have a long acquaintance with the history of the church feel that it is stronger now than at any time in its past. They feel that they can look forward confidently to a long life of usefulness and service to this community. They can say with assurance, like the Hebrews of old, "Hitherto hath the Lord blessed us," and He will continue His blessings in the future.

Truly, as the 90th Psalm of David states: "Lord, Thou hast been a habitation unto us from generation unto generation." When one looks back at the pioneer days of this Pioneer Church, one cannot but acknowledge the Lord's hand in it all. The Lord's hand was leading them when the Danish pioneer homesteaders came out to these vast prairies and chose a spot to settle upon and build their homes and a church. It was His will that they should have chosen this particular spot.

Those early pioneers left a legacy, a treasure beyond all riches. They walked in the way of righteousness, and when they passed on they could safely say to their children and grandchildren, "Follow in my footsteps."

RECOLLECTIONS

Recollections of some of the early members of the church add to the understanding of the history of the church. The author on September 22, 1954 visited Mrs. James M. Rishoi of Brookings, who arrived in this country from Denmark in 1909, and her mother-in-law, Mrs. Nels Rishoi (nee Maria Petersen), then 88 years of age, who came in 1888. He also visited Mrs. Tina Otteson of Brookings, then 81 years of age, whose memory of the area went back to the middle 1880s when the church was organized. Each had something to contribute toward an understanding of the early years.

Argo township began to receive its first homesteaders in 1877 and among these were several Danes who were followed by others in the next few years. Two Nelsens, Pete and Jens (James) Nelsen, arrived in a covered wagon in 1878.

There were nine in Pete Nelsen's family. Jens (James) Nelsen's family, consisting of a wife and three children, arrived in 1879. Jens' brother, Mads Pete Nelsen, arrived with his wife about 1880. Lars Christian Haden, his wife, four boys and two girls, arrived about 1880; and Jens Otteson, a single man of about 22, came in 1880. Nels Jensen, single but not a young man, arrived about 1882. Andrew Nelsen, his wife, three girls and one boy arrived about 1884, as did also Anton Petersen, his wife and three girls.

Nels Rishoi, a single man, came in 1885, and Pete Beck, a single man of about 28, arrived about the same time. In 1884 P. J. Petersen, a young single man, arrived, and about 1885 his brother, Tom Petersen, nearly 20, joined him and their uncle, Anton Petersen. In 1889 Jens Rishoi and his wife Karen arrived with their daughters, i.e., Minnie, and Christina. J.J. Jensen arrived as a single man about 1890. The following year, 1891, Andrew Christensen, his wife, two boys, and a girl arrived. Others were Nels and Thomas Nelson, the latter's wife being a midwife. There were probably others, too, whose names should be recalled and preserved for the future. Inga Rishoi arrived in 1886.

By 1884, when the church was organized, there were at least 32 Danes in the community and 21 more arrived by 1891. This made at least 53, but in addition there were new marriages and births in the community which might have taken the number of persons of Danish blood up to 70 or more in the early 1890s. In 1895 three young women in their early twenties died of tuberculosis. They were Mary and Emma Nelsen and Christina Rishoi.

These Danes and their families desired religious services in their own language, if possible, and services were held for several years in the homes of the various members and also in the little school house about a mile north of the present church. This was known as the Petersen school, or Argo District School No. 26.

Churches were being organized in the area and this may have influenced the Danes to do likewise. About a mile southeast of the present church, the Presbyterians organized a Sunday school and church on March 25, 1882. This was at the post office site of Bainbridge, and meetings were held in the school there. Northeast of the present church about a mile a German Lutheran church was built. When White began in 1884 the Bainbridge Presbyterian Church began to build in the new town and the Methodists also got started. In the area were many Norwegian Lutherans but their services were in Norwegian, not Danish.

High tribute for getting the Danish church erected should be paid to a Norwegian, Hans Christofferson, often endearingly called "the old minister" by elderly members of the church in later years. For 18 years he preached to the people at intervals of about a month, speaking in his own native Norwegian which, apparently, the Danish members of his congregation found little difficulty in understanding. A biographical sketch of him appears elsewhere.

Just before and after the organization of the church in 1884 a number of Danish missionaries came through the community from time to time and would hold services. They doubtless added their influence toward organizing a church.

Jens (James) Nelsen and his wife Sine gave the three acres of land for the church and cemetery, and a stone monument has fittingly been erected to their memory in the church yard. Nelsen, Christofferson, Jens Mortensen, and Jens Ottesen took the lead in building the church. Until the time the church was built it was customary for the members each to give a calf, or a lamb, or sheep, or several bushels of grain, etc., for the support and expenses of the church. Jens Rishoi, a stone mason, laid the foundation of the church, using the stones which members had hauled to the site from their land. At first only the shell of the frame building was erected and enclosed. Later the work inside was finished over a period of years.

Before the church was built and the cemetery was laid out, a few deaths had occurred among the Danish homesteaders. Lacking a cemetery, the bodies were buried on the farms. Later, when the cemetery was opened, most or all of these bodies were disinterred and reburied in the cemetery adjoining the church.

Lars Christian Haden, at whose house the church was organized in 1884, had received some theological training in his earlier days. He often acted in place of the minister when he was absent, conducting funerals, etc.

Pete Green early in the 1900s brought with him his wife and six of their 17 children. For many years thereafter he led the singing. He later lived in Spearfish, S.D. The singing was, of course, in Danish in the early years.

After about 1902, when Christofferson's time ended, Danish was the language of the sermon and service and it continued to be so until about Rev. K.J. Hansen's time as pastor, 1929-1936. He used some English but wasn't adept in its use. For a time both languages were used. Rev. Eilert Nelsen used English only during his pastorate, 1943-1950, but often a song or hymn in Danish was sung. Many young people could not understand Danish and they attended better when the service was in English.

Norwegians sometimes attended the church service in the early years as they could understand the services conducted by Mr. Christofferson. In the past several decades a number of members or attenders who are not of Danish ancestry and could not understand the language added their influence toward a change to English.

In the World War I years, 1917-1918, and until the 1930s, it was customary for the minister on his monthly visits to preach and hold a service in the church in the mornings. Then all the congregation would gather at the home where the minister was staying overnight and have a social occasion, usually with a lunch provided by the hosts. In the afternoon there would be a short religious service, called a lecture, in the home. About this time the church attendance on Sunday was about 30 or so. It is stated that the Danes were good church attenders.

On one occasion it was Mrs. Tina Otteson's turn to meet the minister who arrived in Brookings from Lake Benton on Saturday evening. It was a dark evening and she failed to recognize the Rev. "Little" Straks Nielsen as he alighted from the train, and for a good reason. It happened that earlier that day, or the day before, bees had stung the pastor quite badly on his face and head, so that his face was very much swollen, greatly changing his appearance. Moreover, perhaps because of his condition, he had removed his glasses. He was a sight to behold and must have caused considerable amusement and comment on the following day as he conducted the church services.

There has always been a close relationship between this church and the Diamond Lake Danish Lutheran Church. Early in the century young people from this church used to spend the winter months at Diamond Lake, where they received religious instruction prior to confirmation.

Many of the descendants of the original Danish homesteaders have moved away from the community, some going to White, Brookings, other points in the state and nearby states, and even to the coast. Among these is Mrs. H.C. Friday of Lake Crystal, Minn. At the time of the 75th anniversary in September 1959 she sent a letter from which the following statements are taken:

"May you progress in the good work that you are doing. I have a very warm spot in my heart towards your church, as I went there as a child with my mother and father, who were regular attendants at the services. Also because my parents are buried in the cemetery; it is twenty-one years since we laid them to

rest. I visited the cemetery in June and I was very happy to see it so beautiful and well kept. It is a great satisfaction when one is away to know that it is kept up.

"I would like to have been with you today in reminiscing of years back. I recall the times when the pastors came by horse and buggy from Lake Benton, or was it Tyler? Very often they stayed at our home, coming on Saturday afternoon and leaving on Monday. Sunday was devoted to a church service in the forenoon, and usually a dinner for nearly the entire congregation, and then an informal service of hymns and a talk by the pastor in the afternoon, and again coffee and lunch for the gathering. I have many happy memories of those days."

Mrs. Friday, nee Gudrun Filholm, also sent along a poem, "The Little Church" - slightly revised from the poem by Edgar A. Guest. It follows:

"The little church of long ago, beside the road in Argo, Father, Mother and we three girls, services we attended. How I would like to see it now, the way I saw it then: the straight-back chairs, the pulpit high, the women and the men, dressed stiffly in their Sunday clothes, and solemnly devout, who closed their eyes when prayers were said and never looked about. That little church of long ago, it wasn't grand to see, but even as a little girl it meant a lot to me. The way the hymns were sung comes back to me again; I hear my Mother's voice once more the way I heard it when she and Peter Green would lead, without an organ tone; and if off key they would begin again and everyone would join in. And, too, I see my father toll the bell when in the distance he could see the funeral cortege coming to the church for that last sad rite. It seems to me I'm sitting in that old oak chair the while the minister is preaching in that good old-fashioned style. And though I couldn't understand it all, somehow I know the Bible was the text book in that church of long ago. He didn't preach on politics but used the Word of God, and even now I seem to see the people gravely nod, as though agreeing thoroughly with all he had to say, and then I see them thanking him before they go away. The little church of long ago was not a structure huge; it had no hired singers or no other subterfuge to get the people to attend. 'Twas just a simple place where every Sunday we were told about God's saving grace. No men of wealth were gathered there to help it with a gift; the only worldly thing it had - a mortgage hard to lift. And somehow dreaming here today, I wish that I could know the joy of once more sitting in that church of long ago."

When Alfred H. Rishoi learned that a church history was to be written he offered to write some of his recollections. On November 5, 1959, from his home at 2806 Arbor Drive, Madison 5, Wisconsin, he wrote the following:

"Dear Dr. Parker: Since seeing you at the church in Argo I have tried to think of some things I recall from the early days of the church.

"Let me clarify my position first. Our family left the area in 1902 for a visit to Denmark. We returned in 1909 when I was 16 years old. In 1912 I went away to college, so my recollections cover only a period of about three years, 1909-1912. During this period the congregation shared pastors with Diamond Lake. I recall the names of Pastor Hallweg, Svend Jorgensen, and Aage Møller.

"Of these Jorgensen and Møller were American born but spoke Danish. There was a Mr. Nielsen, I believe, who may have come for the summer months only.

"For two or three summers in this period divinity students would spend their summer vacations teaching the young people the catechism, Bible stories, and some hymns. The students came from Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa. At this time all classes at our church were conducted in the Danish language.

"For two years while I was home the summer church school was held in the District 53 school house. One year, I believe, the church was used. I was especially impressed with one of these teachers. One of his personal habits was to brush his teeth with some foamy stuff and his face was pretty well covered after each ablution.

"During the summer these guest teachers would lead the Sunday church services. At least two of them did not preach. Instead they read printed sermons available in large volumes. The sermons were originally given by famous Danish preachers and covered appropriate topics for each Sunday in the church year. These sermons were usually long. I recall only that they were not theological in nature or content. They were sermons intended for the common simple folk in Denmark. I remember that for several years Father would read these sermons to the family, especially on winter Sundays when transportation was difficult and no regular pastor could make the trip from Lake Benton. The reading of sermons was quite common in Denmark at that time, and so it was natural that recent arrivals would follow the practice.

"You remarked about the use of the expression 'lost generation' which I used in my remarks at the 75th anniversary. Except for the trip the Rishoi family made to Denmark, 1902-1909, I would have been one of them. When we re-

turned in 1909 the kids we had left had grown to be teen-agers and spoke English almost exclusively. It was difficult for the 'old folks' to abandon their mother tongue, and they failed to understand that they were not establishing a colony; they were becoming part of America, part of an American community where English was the language. Many of their young folks joined other churches or just did not go to church. They were lost to the congregation their parents had built.

"Just what effect this had on the vitality of the group is at least uncertain. Many of them have done well, but most of them have moved away. This is true at least for most of those who lived in the community before 1900. Anton Peterson's family moved up around Sisseton, where a son, Miller Peterson, still lives. He might know about the circumstances of moving the cemetery from Anton Peterson's place to its present location. This took place before the time I can remember.

"Tom Peterson went back to Denmark, as did Jens Mortensen. Chris Mortensen's family is no longer in the area. The Becks went to Colorado around Greeley. Oscar, one of the sons, has been mayor of Greeley for several years. Some of the Rishois are still around.

"In your talk I heard some mention of the young people's club. It was active in the 1909-1912 period. I think Pastor Møller was its best booster. It was called the Prairie Rose and I was one time its president. These young people's clubs were quite popular in most Danish congregations. Their principal purpose was social. Usually the pastor would lecture to the group, following a pattern made popular in Denmark by the Folk High Schools. He would lecture on literature, art, travel and such at a level adapted to a group of young farm people. At that time few of them ventured beyond the eighth grade.

"I recall one 'book report,' a story by a Norwegian writer, Alexander Kjelland; translated the title was 'When tne Iron Curtain Falls.' It was about what happened on board a passenger ship when the captain learned that there was a bomb somewhere in the cargo. It turned out to be a dud. An identical movie story was filmed several years ago with a new author and new title.

"In addition to the cultural efforts of the society we went on picnics, one to Lake Hendricks. We had basket socials and dances in the winter time and I suspect in general we served a reasonably good purpose. After I went away to college I lost track of the society and also pretty much of the congre-

gation, or at least the life of it.

"The Kristus statue is Thorwaldsen's Kristus and was given to the church, I believe, by Halger Hartness of Peever, S.D. He married Efra Peterson. Anton Peterson was her father's uncle. I believe this same Halger had something to do with the church bell, but I'm not clear on that. Halger still lives on a farm just outside Peever.

"Of the several pastors who have served this Danish community the outstanding one was probably Aage Møller. I believe he still lives in Solwang, California (where one time he performed a marriage ceremony for Clark Gable). Møller was a new brand of preacher to the people in Argo. He was and is a theologian. He has been a prolific writer on theological subjects and, as might follow, a controversial figure.

"In Denmark, where religion is taught in the public schools, a common attitude is that one's 'börnelördom,' one's first lessons in faith as a child, is something special, something sound, something one must not throw overboard.

"Aage Møller thought otherwise. He wished to grow in knowledge of the faith and wished his congregation to do likewise. It was not appreciated and Aage Møller became discouraged and got a better job as head of a Folks High School in Blair, Nebraska, I believe. He was the first clergyman I ever heard speak of Kierkegaard. That was 50 years ago; today Kierkegaard is quite the rage.

"Pastor Hallweg was perhaps the most learned man who ever preached in Argo Pioneer Church. His difficulty was that he was an aristocrat, intellectually, theologically, and personally. Pete Green didn't like his sermons. Hallweg said things a lot different from the way it was stated in the catechism; heresy.

"I'm about to get tired and I'm not at all certain I have added to your fund of knowledge regarding the early years. If anything I have written happens to add to what you have, I shall be satisfied. It was a pleasure to meet you and I and many others sincerely appreciate your efforts in trying to write down as good a record of that congregation as material available will permit.

"I said a few words at the anniversary celebration and I really had one thing more I wanted to say -: For its own survival the church or the congregation should become and be a community church. I don't see how it can survive unless it becomes one. I'm proud and happy about its and my national origin, but survival on this basis I do not think possible or desirable."

The author sent the preceding letter to James M. Rishoi of Brookings with the suggestion that, having been born about 1889, and having lived in the area longer, he might have corrections or additions to make to his brother's letter. The following letter, written on November 21, 1959, came in answer:

"Dear Dr. Parker: I acknowledge your kind suggestion that I contribute such items as I recall from the early history of the congregation.

"I note with interest the letter my brother Alfred has written. My position is very similar to Alfred's. I returned from Denmark in 1905, worked around the Argo vicinity about two years, then came to Brookings for a couple of years. In 1909 I left Brookings County and really did not return to these parts until 1931. I have lived in Brookings since then but have had only limited contact with Pioneer Lutheran Church during that time.

"I note Alfred mentioned some of the early pastors. Prior to Hans Christofferson there were what we should perhaps term circuit riders, who must be credited with the early interest in establishment of the congregation. As I recall, the first regularly ordained minister was Rev. N. Henningsen. He was a large person, quite domineering in attitude towards his congregation. I recall a preacher named Bolvig who came to White for the purpose of conducting one service for the Danes. Rev. Henningsen had not been consulted and, when he next came to Argo to conduct a service (which was only once a month), he learned of Rev. Bolvig's service. Rev. Bolvig was of the Baptist faith. Rev. Henningsen served notice on the congregation that there would be no such non-Lutheran services in the church as long as he, Henningsen, was their pastor. Needless to say, such an edict was not kindly accepted by the congregation and it is doubtful if the episode was ever repeated.

"Hans Christofferson had been an important influence during the many years he served the congregation. When the church was nearly completed, it was naturally his desire that the church be affiliated with the synod most like that of his own Norse Hauge Synod. That would then be the United Evangelical Lutheran Church. However, the Danish ministers that followed Christofferson were followers of Grundtvig and his teaching, and Pioneer Lutheran Church became affiliated with that group.

"Rev. N. Henningsen did not stay long (1902-1906), accepting a call to a congregation at Irene, S.D., after which the Pioneer congregation lost track of him. As I recall, he was followed at Pioneer by Rev. J.J. Mylund, a man of

strong spiritual convictions, a power in the pulpit, and also a wonderful singer of the much-loved Danish hymns. He was a man well along in years and was not in very good health. Today there is a grave marker in the Diamond Lake cemetery erected to his memory.

"After Mylund came Johannes Jensen. This was his first call and he remained for some years, also serving the Diamond Lake Church. Jensen was followed by several ministers. Most of those now living are still in the Holy Ministry. Alfred mentions Rev. Hallweg, or Helvig; I doubt if he was anything but an interim pastor at Pioneer. He was president of the Folk High School at Tyler, Minn., and helped out with services at struggling congregations, such as Pioneer. He later returned to Denmark and became the pastor of Helig Aands Kirken (Church of the Holy Ghost) in Copenhagen. I visited that church ten years ago, when Mrs. Rishoi, daughter Valborg, and I were in Copenhagen.

"Rev. Thorvald Kjaer has returned to his native Denmark and seemingly has forsaken the ministry and is engaged in the grocery business at the latest information. Rev. K. Jensen Hansen, pastor during the early 1930s, returned with his American-born wife to Denmark, where he is teaching school.

"I have tried to get some information about the altar, Christus, and bell. My informants indicate the bell was largely the responsibility of Holger Hortness, a single man who worked in the Argo locality. He later married Efra Petersen, daughter of Peter J. Petersen, and they moved to a farm near Peever, S.D. The altar and Christus were acquired by the congregation according to the only information available.

"I was in attendance at the service for the dedication of the church and cemetery. If my memory serves me right it was in June 1906. The church building was still not completed, although services had been conducted there for about eight or nine years. I am one of the very few who were here when the church was built. I could mention that the original plan for a church building to serve the congregation was for its location on the southwest corner of the Anton Petersen homestead, a mile north and two miles east of the present location. A cemetery was started there and for many years was known as Union Corner. However, after the present location was agreed upon and the church site determined, all graves were re-located, some at the present cemetery and others elsewhere.

"This congregation has had a continuous struggle, but with determination and devotion has survived. Those sturdy men and women who organized the congregation, built the church, supported it, and kept it a going institution were truly pioneers. They are an example for those who follow, now paying dividends in the shape of true values not measured by a dollar sign.

"I am in agreement in part with my brother Alfred that this church should become a church to serve the community, not alone a church for those of Danish extraction. I do not fully agree that it should become a community church as such, but remain a Lutheran church to serve any and all who would care to affiliate or just attend such services. That program is not for me to sponsor or advocate, but I am of the opinion something like that will be necessary for growth and survival."

ORIGINAL MEMBERS

The record book of the Pioneer Evangelical Lutheran Church gives the following listing of the original members and their families. A few Danish terms are easily understood: med Familie, with family; og Kone, and wife.

Lauritz Haden med Familie, Peter Nelson med Familie, Soren Knudtson med Familie, Anthon Pederson med Familie, Anders Nelson med Familie, Nicoline Mortensen, Niels Jorgensen, Niels Jenson, Peter Jenson og Kone, Thomas Peterson og Kone, Niels Rishoi og Kone, Inger Rishoi, Peder Nielson Bak og Kone, Christian Nielson, Christian Christenson, Anders Chr. Christensen med Familie, Jens Rishoi med Familie, Christian Jacobson, Niels Poulson, Niels Chr. Knudson, Disse Peter Peterson, Jens Chr. Jenson og Kone, Mads Chr. Pederson med Familie, Jens Johan Jenson, Niels Bok Jenson, Peter Bentsen og Kone, Jens Theodor Mortensen, Jens Christian Ottesen og Kone, Ole Christian Jensen og Kone, Maren Marie Heilesen, Niels Thomsen, Christen Nielsen, Jens Chr. Mortensen med Familie, Thomas Nelsen med Familie, Christian Peter Sorensen med Familie, Chr. Malling E. Christensen med Familie, Marinus Thomsen med Familie, Niels Jensen, Tscherning Filholm med Familie, and Jens P. Jensen og Kone.

In this group there were 17 single men, 9 married men with only a wife listed, and 14 men with a family, making a total of 40. However, with their families, they may have numbered 70 or more. Many of their descendants are still found in the community and many are members of the Pioneer Church.

CEMETERY INSCRIPTIONS

Many of the birth and death dates of the members recorded above appear on gravestones erected in the cemetery which adjoins the Pioneer church.

Dorothea Anderson, 1840-1900. Peter N. Beck, ---1905. Arthur Beck, ---1895. Myrtle Beck, 1893-1909. Margaret Christens, 1917-1918. Theodore Christensen, 1895-1903. Lena Christensen, 1851-1892. Andrew Christensen, 1852-1915. Maren Christensen, 1853-1926. Ane Marie Filholm, 1876-1938. Sherning Filholm, 1879-1938. Nels Filholm, 1905-1905. Lawrence Jensen, ---1939. Anna K. Jensen, 1893-1893. J.J. Jensen, 1871-1946. Mrs. Olina Jensen, 1872-1957. Robert Jensen, 1902-1909. Hilda Jensen, 1909-1911. Lillian M. Jensen, 1909-1909. Cliffon Jensen, 1923-1932. Helga Jensen, 1933-1933. Debra Mae Jensen, 1958-1958. Allen Jensen, 1958-1958. Walter Paul Knutson, ---1944. Clarence Madsen, 1912-1920. Mother Ingur M. Madsen, 1889-1948. Baby David Leroy Madsen, 1950-1950. Ernest Michelsen, 1896-1930. Mike Michelsen, 1887-1955. Maxine Michelsen, ---1934. Henry Nelson, 1881-1881. Mary Nelson, 1875-1898. Gertrud M. Nielsen, 1862-1946. Martenis Nielsen, 1864-1942. Sine Nelson, 1853-1933. James Nelson, 1852-1937. Emma L. Nelson, 1877-1898. Pater J. Petersen, 1862-1943. Anna M. Petersen, 1866-1951. Waldemar Peterson, ---1895. Niels Rishoi, 1863-1934. Mrs. Marie Rishoi, 1866-1954. Ottilea Rishoi, 1903-1914. Karen M. Rishoi, ---1896. Lymann Danford Rishoi, ---1917. Caroline M. Rishoi, ---1891. Stina Rishoi, ---1892. Baby Girl Rudebusch, 1957-1957. Hedevig Thomsen, 1872-1955. Baby Son Thompson, 1957-1957. Nels Thompson, 1888-1951. Chris C. Thomsen, 1876-1955. Baby Westegaard, ---1925. These names and dates were transcribed in the late fall of 1959 and they represent all inscribed gravestones in the cemetery at that time.

As was noted elsewhere, before the Pioneer cemetery was opened, deaths had occurred and burials had taken place on the southwest corner, later known for a time as Union Corner, of Anton Petersen's homestead which was located a mile north and two miles east of the present Pioneer cemetery and church. All the graves there were re-located, some at the present cemetery and others elsewhere. Another nearby cemetery is about a mile north and one and a half miles east of the Pioneer cemetery. Some of the early homesteaders and undoubtedly some of their descendants are buried in the White cemetery, about a mile east of the nearby town of White.

1880 CENSUS DATA OF DANES

When the 1880 census of Brookings County was taken in June of that year it revealed a population of 4,965 persons, of whom 3,406 were native-born Americans, and 1,559 who were foreign-born. Of the latter, 98 were born in Denmark and 968 in Sweden and Norway; 99 were born in the German Empire and among them may have been a few Danes from Schleswig-Holstein. Of the total 4,965 persons, 2,860 were males and 2,105 were females.

In the four townships surrounding the later site of the Pioneer Church there were 61 Danish persons. Argo had the most, 44; Eureka, to the west, had 6; Sterling, to the southwest, had 11; and Afton, to the south, had none.

In Argo township were the following: Peter Nelson, 28; Mary his wife, 38; Frederick, 12; Willie, 10; Peter, 8; Andrew, 5; Emma, 3; Alfred, 6 months. The first five children were all born in Illinois; Alfred in Dakota Territory.

Nels Gurgenson, 68, the father-in-law, a widower, was also living with the Peter Nelson family, as was also Martha Nelson, 8, who was born in Wisconsin.

Soren Knutson, 48; wife Anna T., 41; George, 16; Martin, 13; Freddie, 10; Arthur, 8; Matilda, 6; Christina, 1. The six children were born in Minnesota.

L. Haden (evidently Lauritz C. Haden) at whose house the Pioneer Church was organized four years later), 56; wife Carrie, 44; James, 22; Andrew, 16 or 17; Carl, 10; Peter, 5; Mary, 24; Maria, 16; Laura, 13; Anna, 8; Ella, 8. All the children and adults were born in Denmark.

L.C. Chrinasson, 29, a single man, boarded with the Martin Peterson family, who were Norwegians, though L.C.C. was born in Denmark.

Anton Peterson, 42; wife Hannah, 39; Tena, 11; Lucia, 8; Willie, 5; Emma, 2, who was born in Illinois, though the three older children were born in Denmark. Living with the Petersons was the Danish mother-in-law, Lena Westerholt, 78, a widow.

P.L. Christian, 25; wife Alice E., 20; Inez B., 12, who was born in Minnesota. The father was born in Denmark, the mother in Wisconsin, though her father was born in New York and her mother in Vermont.

Theodore Christian, 28; wife Maggie, 18, born in Minnesota of parents who were born in Germany; Wifred, 1 month; and George, brother of Theodore, 29 and single.

In Eureka township lived the following: Nels Anderson, 21, single; Sopha, 59, his widowed mother; and Rasmus, 24, single, his brother.

L.C. Halseth, 23, a Norwegian, whose wife Lena, 25, was born in Wisconsin of a Danish father and a Norwegian mother; Christ A., 1 month, born in Dakota.

In Sterling township lived the following Danes: Sophia Anderson, 58, a widow; Rasmus Anderson, 24, single; and perhaps Nils Anderson, 22, single.

H.C. Simonson, 39; wife Mary A., 39; Julius, 10; Oscar, 8; Matilda, 6; Laura P., 5; Hannah, 4; Alfred, 1, who was born in Dakota, while his brothers and sisters were all born in Minnesota. Mary, the wife, had Norwegian parents. There is a possibility that the Simonsons lived in Medary township.

The following family may also have lived in Sterling township, though it is listed, perhaps mistakenly, under Trenton township:

Jens Nelson, 28; wife Sene, 27; Tena, 7; Mary, 4; Emma, 1; and brother Peter Nelson, a widower, 30. Tena was born in Denmark, as were the adults, but Mary and Emma were born in Minnesota.

About 12 to 18 miles west of the Pioneer Church is Laketon township adjoining Lake Poinsett, where 34 Danes, the second largest colony in the county, lived in 1880. These included Chs. Wensker, 47; his wife Christenia, 43; Carl, 19 Kathrinine, 16; Olie, 11; Peder, 5; and Anna, 2. Andrew P. Johnson, 37; wife Anna, 29; and Agustine, 2, whose mother was of Swedish parentage. Living with them as a house servant was a Dane, Christena Palson, 14. Peter C. Palson, 44; wife Mary K., 45; Paul C., 23, single; Christian, 19; Carrie, 16; Mary, 9; Tenia, 7; Hannah, 4; and Senia, 3; all born in Denmark. Larse Matson, 51; wife Christenia, 49; Christian, 16; Christeffer, 14; Martain, 10; Tremia, 5; Katherien, 5; Otos, 3; all born in Denmark. Chin Peterson, 30; wife Nettie; Niels, 4 Morton, 2; all born in Denmark. Henser Severson, 56; Paul, his son, 17; both born in Denmark. Living in the same house were Andrew Christenson, 29, single, and Christ Mesten, 33, single, both boarders and both born in Denmark.

These names are given as spelled by the census enumerator, who must have had a difficult time as he tried to secure data from people who knew little or no English.

Near the Laketon township Danes were still other Danes in Kingsbury and Hamlin counties. The pioneer of the colony in this area was Julius Christensen who located himself on the shore of Lake Albert by or in 1877. In that year he wrote to a former neighbor back in Denmark encouraging other Danes to migrate.

What happened upon receipt of this letter in Denmark was perhaps typical of what may have happened to some of the early Danish settlers of the Pioneer Church area. E.W. Smith, an 1877 arrival at Oakwood, wrote of what happened:

"These people were so impressed with the contents of the letter that they decided to break away from that land of small opportunities and try their fortunes in a new world, and immediately proceeded to prepare for removal to Dakota. These parties consisted of Lars Madsen, Christopher Madsen, and J.C. Paulsen and their respective families.

"They disposed of their property and converted everything available into cash, and at once notified Mr. Christensen that they would start on a certain date, and from the best information they could obtain, they would be in Luverne, Minnesota, on a certain day.

"Mr. Christensen made calculation as near as possible, greased his covered wagon, braided the manes and tails of his long-haired bovine steeds and, at the proper time, started for Luverne to meet his old neighbors. They made close connections and were soon on the trail for Lake Albert....

"Not the whole number he expected, however, as Lars Madsen, in taking an account of cash, discovered that he was short of funds and some of the family would have to be left until funds could be procured to pay transportation. It was decided that two of the girls, the oldest of the children, should remain until that time. The girls readily assented...confident that in a year's time there would be money enough secured to enable them to join the family in the new world, which they did.

"The three families, consisting of nineteen persons, with the necessary luggage, created a crowded condition in that lone covered wagon, and another team of oxen was secured to take part of the load; and even with the additional team some of them had to walk, but these hardy people were inspired with the spirit of the pioneers of the west, and made the long and tiresome journey without complaint or mishap.

"They settled in the northwestern part of Brookings County, near Lake Poinsett, and erected homes. The next year quite a number of their nationality settled in their vicinity. I will mention a few of them....Mathias Christensen....Peter Christensen...Carl Ingval, A. Brunic, two Norgaard brothers, and many others, all settling in that vicinity in Brookings and Kingsbury counties ...and...not a failure on the part of any of them."

DIAMOND LAKE CHURCH

About 21 miles east of the Argo Pioneer Church is the Diamond Lake Lutheran Church with which the Pioneer Church has long had close relations. A brief history of that church will throw some light on the early history of the Argo church. The Danes began settling around and in Argo township before they began to settle around Diamond Lake and at Tyler. The year 1886 saw the first Danish homesteaders around Lake Benton and Tyler, according to Mathias Andersen in his "Menigheden i Diamond Lake." On a Sunday, September 19, 1886 a few Danish families and young men gathered at the Eiler Thomsen home and after a short discussion it was decided to organize a congregation. This was more than two years after the Pioneer Church in Argo had effected an organization. For a time the members met in homes for services and generally in the Eiler Thomsen home, as his was the largest one. Rev. J.J. Mylund of Cedar Falls, Iowa, was their first pastor. The following summer a Rev. Madsen of Sleepy Eye and a Rev. Hansen of Daneville, S.D., extended their services, alternating. A year later Rev. H.J. Pedersen became the minister for the Tyler congregation and at the same time served Diamond Lake, at which time they were holding services in the District No. 4 school house.

During the summer of 1888 the Danebod Folk School was built at Tyler and Carl Hansen became its first instructor. He was an able speaker and many times gave interesting readings and lectures at Diamond Lake also. He and Rev. Pedersen belonged to the simple folk and were well fitted to the prairie life in Diamond Lake. At the gatherings in the school house or in the homes they joined in with all the community and read and played games, danced, and always sang. The Danes loved to sing, whether at home or behind the plow. They brought with them the old folk songs from Denmark, such as 'The Tiller of the Soil,' and 'Give me a simple life, a merry heart, and with eye for things above as God ordained.'

When the colony was started a strip of land had been set aside for a church, but the new congregational board decided to sell this piece of land for $500, and they accepted a gift of three acres from Jorgen Jorgensen where they built their first church edifice free of debt in 1890. Thus they preceded the Argo vicinity Danes in acquiring a building. To have it free of debt was a big accomplishment for these simple Danish farmers who had started out with nothing

only four years earlier. The average sized farm was only 80 acres. No one could afford to use coal; hay and flax straw was their main fuel.

A.E. Tasker in his "Early History of Lincoln County" states: "When the colony was first established the North Western Railway Company donated 100 acres of land, situated on the banks of the lake after which the township was named, viz., Diamond Lake, to be used for church purposes. This land was afterward sold to Peter Linnet for the sum of $500 and the proceeds devoted to the erection of a church edifice." This donation of land and the money received from it may have been the determining factor in allowing the Diamond Lake Church to erect their church a decade before the Pioneer Church could do so.

Tasker continues: "P.C. Pedersen, who owned the farm adjoining the church on the east, donated two acres of land adjoining the church grounds and cemetery on the south, and hereon was built a church hall. Later, in 1897, a parsonage was erected upon the same plot of ground just west of the hall. Rev. and Mrs. N.P. Hald, but recently married, first occupied the parsonage." By this time, writes Andersen, a group of children were growing up in the colony and Rev. Hald started teaching a Danish school. He was an ambitious young man. He also discovered the Danish community in the Argo vicinity, who were being served by a Norwegian layman, Hans Christofferson. He contacted them and soon became their first minister. After this time many of the Diamond Lake pastors also served the Pioneer Church in Argo township.

Writing of the period just after the Diamond Lake church was built, Tasker states: "Rev. N.C. Strandskov was the first resident pastor to serve the congregation. A residence on the farm adjacent to the present church property on the east, being vacant, Rev. Strandskov and family occupied same.... Rev. Strandskov took charge of the pastorate of the congregation in 1891 and relinquished same in 1893. For sometime after 1893 the congregation was served by Rev. Pedersen of Danebod and Rev. Helland of South Dakota. In 1896 Rev. N.P. Hald became pastor and served until 1900. From 1900 the congregation was served by Rev. Bobjerg of Tyler and a Norwegian minister from Lake Benton, for a period of about two years. In 1902 Rev. N. Henningson became pastor and served until 1905. During the pastorate of Rev. Hald the Danish congregation at White (Pioneer Church) became affiliated with the Diamond Lake charge and has remained so affiliated to the present time (1936), having shared the same minister during that time.

"Rev. J.J. Nylund became pastor of the charge in 1905 and died the following year, his remains being interred in the cemetery adjacent to the church.

"In addition to the pastors previously mentioned, Rev. Johanes Jensen served as pastor from 1906 to 1909; Rev. Aage Moller, 1910-1913; Rev. E.N. Nielsen 1914-1917; Rev. N.P. Pedersen of Tyler, 1917-1918. Later in 1918 Rev. Henrik Plambeck became pastor and served until 1924; Rev. Thorvald Kjaer served from 1925 to 1929, and Rev. K. Jensen Hansen from 1929 to 1934."

Just as the history of the Pioneer Church of Argo township is linked with the history of the Diamond Lake Church, so the history of the latter is somewhat linked with the Danish Lutheran Church, 'Danebod', of Tyler, Minnesota. This church was dedicated on Sunday, June 16, 1895, with an estimated attendance of 1000 to 1500 persons. "Services were opened by an address of welcome by Rev. H.J. Pedersen, resident pastor and through whose efforts the Danish colony in Lincoln county was founded and who inspired and directed the erection of the splendid edifice. ....

"The building is a magnificent structure in the form of a Greek cross. It is an exact copy of the celebrated Cross church at Vallekilde, Denmark. The church cost about $6,000 and is free from all incumbrance. The regular attendance will be nearly 700, and the average number present at every meeting will probably not be far from 400." So stated an account in the Lake Benton News, June 19, 1895, three days after the dedication. The main address given by Rev. P. Kjolhede included the following remarks:

"The idea of such a magnificent structure...did not enter the mind of even the most enthusiastic among the small but devoted band of the sons of Denmark who held the first meeting in Lincoln county about eight years ago (1887). The first meeting was held in what the poet has called God's first temple - a grove - on the beautiful island in Lake Benton. The resident minister (H.J. Pedersen) was present at the initial meeting and to him...too much credit could not be given for the untiring zeal and great ability which he displayed from the day he landed in the county; and now that his efforts were to be crowned by magnificent success, well might he be entitled to the hearty congratulations of everyone."

A.E. Tasker's "Early History of Lincoln County" on pages 41-42 relates the circumstances which brought many Danes into the county in the middle 1880s, where 35,000 acres was alloted to them for settlement for a three year period.

H A N S C H R I S T O F F E R S O N

The first pastor of the Pioneer Church, a Norwegian, played such a large part in the early life of the church that it will be found of interest to reproduce the biographical sketch of him as it appears in the "Memorial and Biographical Record, an Illustrated Compendium of Biography," published in 1898 by the Geo. A. Ogle & Co. Page 489 has the following account:

"Hans Christofferson, an influential citizen of Brookings township, Brookings county, has not only been a successful and useful farmer but has exerted a marked influence in promoting the moral and spiritual welfare of the community. He was born near Christiana, Norway, August 12, 1838, a son of Ole and Elizabeth (Heuensdaughter) Christofferson. The father was a housebuilder, constructing log houses, and lived and died in his native land.

"Our subject grew to maturity in Norway, where he was engaged in farming and cabinet making until 1868, when he moved to America, locating in Chicago, where he resided ten years, working at his trade. He then went to Lac qui Parle county, Minnesota, where he lived on a farm and also worked at carpentering. In the fall of 1878 he came to Brookings county and took a homestead claim of eighty acres, on section 13, Brookings township, and drew two thousand feet of lumber from Canby, Minnesota, with which he built a cabin 14 x 16 feet and covered it with sods. In this humble home he lived about eight years while he improved and developed his farm, which proved to be one of the best in Brookings county. Mr. Christofferson is now the fortunate owner of two hundred and forty acres of farm land in Brookings township, which he has developed into a high state of cultivation and has supplied it with a commodious and comfortable residence, outbuildings and such home comforts as make life enjoyable. Mr. Christofferson first visited Brookings county in 1876, two years before making his home there, following an Indian trail across the county. The country was then entirely unsettled and in driving fifty miles he did not see a single white man. The first house in the village of Brookings was moved there on rollers from Fountain...after he located in the county.

"In June, 1863, our subject was married to Miss Gorine Olsen, a native of Christiana, Norway, and their wedded life has been blessed to them by the advent of seven children, three of whom are still living: Carl Martin, a photographer at Adams, Minnesota; Clara Louise, wife of Albert Mark, Brookings; and

Gena. The family is connected with the United Norwegian church of Brookings. From the age of seventeen Mr. Christofferson has taken a great interest in the work of the church and did much missionary work while in Chicago and Minnesota. After coming to Brookings county he has held services at different points throughout the county and preached the first Lutheran sermon in the city of Brookings. He still holds services regularly once in two weeks besides often holding special meetings. Mr. Christofferson has been very zealous and energetic in this work and although he has at times been obliged to go through water knee deep he has been prompt in meeting his appointments, and has conducted these services and lived each day in a manner that has started a wave of influence in the ocean of time that shall continue to roll when Mr. Christofferson shall have quit the shores of time to try the realities of the spirit land.

"Politically our subject is a Republican and has always taken an active interest in local politics and educational matters. For many years he has been chairman of the school board, and has long been a member of the board of supervisors of which he has been two years chairman."

Mr. Christofferson, it is said, was never ordained. He lived on what is now known as the Arlo Hill farm, just north of Brookings. He has two granddaughters still living in the area, children of his son Martin. They are Mrs. Vernon Christopherson, north of Brookings, and Irene C. (Mrs. Andrew L.) Jacobsen, of Clear Lake, S.D. The latter states that Hans Christofferson died in 1920 at Volga, S.D., and that he is buried there. He was about 82 at the time.

When the census was taken in June 1880 it gave the following data: Hans Christopherson, 41; his wife Lorena, 43; a son, Charley, 9; Clara L., 7; and Henry O., 4. The three children were born in Illinois and the parents in Norway, as were also their parents.

LATER CHURCH MEMBERS

On page 27, under the caption, "Original Members", are listed what were thought to be the original members who formed the congregational organization on July 5, 1884. However, a more accurate caption would have been "Original and Early Members." However, a careful study of page 3 of the church record book, taking note of the differences in handwriting, penmanship, ink, color of ink, etc., has led James M. Rishoi and the author to decide that only the fol-

lowing persons formed the organization on July 5, 1884: Lauritz Haden and family, Peter Nelson, and family, Soren Knudtson and family, Anthon Pederson and family, Anders Nelson and family, Jens Nelson, Nicoline Mortensen (a widow), Niels Jorgensen (a widower), Niels Jenson, Peter Jenson. (The foregoing spellings are found in the record book but later spellings were sometimes used, such as Nielsen for Nelson, Jensen for Jenson, James for Jens, etc.) This listing gives 4 single or widowed persons, plus 5 families, making perhaps 20 to 25 persons instead of the numbers given at the bottom of page 27 and the middle of page 12.

Other early members listed on page 3 of the church record book include the following: Peter Jenson's wife, Jens Nelson's family, Thomas Peterson (a single man who arrived in 1885 and later married), Nels Rishoi (a single man who arrived in 1885, Mrs. Rishoi arriving in 1888), Inger Rishoi (a single man arriving in 1886), Peter Nielsen Beck (who arrived in 1888, who married a wife who also arrived, single, in 1888), Christian Nielsen (who arrived about 1888), Christian Christiansen (who arrived about 1888), Anders Chr. Christensen and family (about 1890), Jens Rishoi and family in 1889, Christian Jacobson, Niels Poulsen (a single man about 1890), Niels Chr. Knudson, Disse Peter Peterson (a single man).

The following arrived in the early 1890s: Jens Chr. Jensen and wife, Mads Chr. Pedersen and family, Jens Johna Jensen, Niels Beck Jensen, Peter Bentsen and wife, Jens Theo. Mortensen (single), Jens Chr. Ottesen and wife, Ole Chr. Jensen and wife, Maren Marie Heilesen (a widow), Niels Thomsen (single), Christen Nielsen, Jens Chr. Mortensen and wife, Thomas Nielsen and family, Christian Peter Sorensen and family.

The following arrived after 1900 and up to 1910: Chr. Malling E. Christensen and family, Marinus Thomsen and family, Niels Jensen, Tscherning Filholm and family, Jens P. Jensen and wife.

The preceding names are all listed above on page 27, sometimes with different spelling than those here given. Also it is known that Peter Green and family arrived between 1900 and 1910, though the church record book has omitted their names. Still other names of members may have been omitted before 1910, and it seems likely that others joined the church before the next record begins on page 4 of the church record book.

Beginning with page 4, and continuing on page 5 and 12 of the church book the year of joining the church is given, together with the ages of the persons. The data follow: 1914 Kjel-Chris Thomsen, 37, and wife Rikke, 33. 1915 Jorgen Martinus Madsen, 27, and wife Marie, 26; Michael Chr. Michaelsen, 28, and wife Agnes, 22. 1920 Nels Christensen, 32, and wife Laura, 26; Sen Jensen, 35, and wife Laurine, 34. 1922 Sigurd Michaelsen, 29, and wife Edna, 22; Anton N. Jensen, 33, and wife Nellie M., 24. 1923 Adolf Westergaard, 30, and wife Dorthe, 24; Alfred Christensen, 28, and wife Emma, 27; Einar Knudsen, 30, and wife Anna Marie, 29; Jens Knudsen, 28. 1926 Christ Christensen, 39, and wife Marie, 39; Ernest Michaelsen, 29, and wife Anna, 28. 1929 Christian Hansen, 24, and wife Myarta, 24. 1930 Peter Jensen, 29, and wife Jensine, 30. 1932 Niels Jensen, and wife Emma. 1934 John Jensen, 32, and wife Anna, 30; Halvor Nielsen, 37, and wife Marie, 30. 1939 Niels Thomsen, 51, and wife Alvine, 41; Jens C. Jensen, 44, and wife Augusta, 42; Jens Anders Jensen, 44, and wife Sonja, 36. 1943 Carl Emil Rishoi, 48, and wife Mary, 39. 1944 Manfred Niels Thompsen, 27, and wife Betty, 21. 1946 Leonard Alvin Jensen, 26, and wife Arloene E.; Harlof Harvey Jensen, 33, and wife Thallis N., 22; Maurice O. Madsen, 24, and wife Ruth Evelyn, 23; Walter Knudsen, 26, and wife Irene M., 21; Delbert P. Thomsen, 27, and wife Marion, 29. 1952 Charles Jensen, 43, and wife Gladys, 39. 1955 Marvin Charles Lamb, 34, and wife Audry M., 33; Christa Michaelsen; Lloyd Hansen, 30, and wife Roberta, 21. 1959 Alfred Hortness and wife. (The ages of the individuals may have been recorded as a means of distinguishing the many persons with similar names.)

Formands

The following persons have served as formands, or presidents, of the congregation: Lauritz Haden, 1884-1886; Peter Nelson, 1887-1897; Peter N. Beck, 1898-1901; Niels Rishoi, 1902-1903; Thomas Nielsen, 1903-1904; Peter J. Petersen, 1905-1912; Niels Rishoi, 1913-1921; Tscherning Filholm, 1922-1923; Peter Green, 1923-1924; Niels Christensen, 1924-1928; Senius Jensen, 1929-1937; J.P. Jensen, 1938-1939; Niels Christensen, 1940-1943; Senius Jensen, 1944-1945; Niels Christensen, 1945-1945; Emil Rishoi, 1946-1952; and Christ Hansen, 1953-

Many others have served through the past seventy-five years in various capacities, such as secretary (sekretor), kaserer (treasurer), forstandere, teacher, etc. Their faithful service has made the present church possible.

THE HADEN FAMILY

Lars C. Haden played such a large part in the early history of the Pioneer Church that some facts about his life should be recorded.

Lars was born to Christian Mortenson and his wife, Marianna, on December 26, 1823. The couple also had a daughter, Lisa or Leesa, who later married Jens Christian Jepson, but remained childless. Marianna was the daughter of Jens Anderson (1800-1879) and his wife, Maren (1802-1868). Jens Anderson had been a carpenter at first, building houses and other buildings before he went to farming. He was able to save enough money by working for others to buy his farm and build upon it. Karen was their only child.

At a neighborhood gathering in the 1850s Karen and Lars met, for Lars was then working on a nearby farm. Their marriage took place on March 26, 1855, and the young couple began their married life at the wife's home with the Andersons. Lars would go out to work in the morning and return at night. After a time Jens Anderson built an addition to their house and still later bought a small place and built himself a new house where he and his wife lived until his death in 1879. As rent for the place where he lived, Lars had to pay each fall some of the farm produce, such as meat, potatoes, rye for bread, and peat for fuel. Jens Anderson raised sheep and feed enough for them and his cow.

When Jens Anderson was a boy he herded sheep while more fortunate boys were attending school. However, he taught himself to read in his spare time and became a great reader. He acquired quite a library during his lifetime and this library was to play an important part in bringing the Haden family to America. No doubt Lars Haden after his marriage in 1855 read many of the books in the library and perhaps thus deepened his knowledge and love of religion.

The Anderson-Haden farm was three miles from the North Sea, the two nearest trading places being Lökken and Lynstrop, sea coast towns. The nearest large town was Hjerring, Denmark. The farm was too near the sea to raise wheat. Rye, barley, and oats were the main farm crops and were used for feed for the cattle. Flax was also raised. Native wild grass, 'lyng', was cut for hay. In a few places there were scattered blueberry plants. Beneath the wild grass and berries was a layer of clay and this was often hauled out onto the land for fertilizer. Lars Haden had a team of horses, 4 or 5 cows and a calf, and 7 or 8 hens and a rooster.

Flax to be used for weaving was first pulled, then tied in bundles and put to soak in the holes where the clay had been taken out and which meanwhile had been filled with rain water. After the bundles had stayed there for some time the hard outside shell of the flax could be taken off. Then the bundles were taken out and spread on the clean grass to dry. Finally they were further dried in the big oven after the bread was taken out, and then hung over a frame. Two boards hinged at one end were worked up and down to break the crust on the flax, the flax being moved little by little till cleared to the end. Then it was combed. The combings were used for filling for hand towels while the long strands were used for linen cloth.

Nearly all kinds of vegetables grew well on the Haden farm - cabbages, onions, kale, carrots, turnips, parsnips, and potatoes, the money crop. In planting potatoes a person wearing a heavy apron filled with peat ashes followed the one dropping the potatoes and put a handful of ashes in each hill for fertilizer. Gooseberries, currants, and strawberries were raised, and raspberries could be grown where there was a gardener.

The Hadens were near enough the North Sea that they could see the ships as they came in to port. Occasionally there would be a wreck during a fog and especially with a high wind a ship would sometimes be driven on the sandbars. They saw one vessel help another one free and both sailed away. When a wreck took place the word would spread rapidly and the countryside would flock to the beach where the salvage would be sold, the proceeds going to the owner of the vessel. On one occasion a shipment of large, mild, white onions, presumably Bermudas, came bobbing in to the beach. At another time Lars brought home a box of figs and the children had a feast.

Peat was cut into bricks, loaded on a wheelbarrow, and taken up on a slope to be laid out to drain dry. After all was thoroughly dry it was loaded into a wagon, taken to the house, and stacked in the store room for future use. The fire was banked so the coals would be held over for the next using, and if a fire went out the children were sent to the neighbors to borrow some burning coals. These were placed in the heel of their wooden shoes and carried by the toe and thus taken home. Roots of plants were shaved off, dried, and stored away for kindling.

The bake oven was about six feet square with an arched top. Peat was put in tiers separated from other tiers to make a draft. About 6 or 8 rows high

in each row provided a tunnel for a draft. The fire was started about an hour and a half before the time for the bread to go in. When the peat was in coals it was raked to the sides in order that the bottom of the oven might be well heated, then the coals were raked into the ashpit and covered with ashes. By that time the whole oven was hot and in a glow. A blade, like a wide paddle shaved thin on its point, on a long handle was used. Each loaf was put on that and placed in the oven and later removed the same way. After the bread was out there would be heat enough to bake cakes, cookies, coffee-cakes, or even pies. In order to hasten the filling of the oven each loaf was carried and put on the paddle for the cook to put it in the oven.

Cakes were baked in round pans or rolled and shaped into a shape like a pretzel. Spices were cardamom, cinnamon, and allspice. Raisins were used. They had neither soda nor baking powder, depending upon eggs for 'lightening'. Egg whites were beaten with a whisk made of willow twigs peeled and tied together.

In Lars Haden's house the dining table was about a yard wide. It and all other tables had pine tops scoured white with sand. The scrubbing brush was a twist of rye straw, twisted into a figure 8, and used with sand. This did good work on floors as well as on tables. For every day use, a thin board 6 or 7 inches wide and reaching the full length of the table was used for plates. It too was scoured and a hole in one end allowed it to be hung up.

Benches with a back extended along one side and one end of the table. Chairs, as needed, were used on the other side. Each person had his own horn spoon and cup. Lars Haden's spoon was cream-colored, while his son Jim's was black. Knives and forks were of steel.

Every morning after sweeping was done a fresh sprinkling of white sand from the North Sea beach was put on the floor not only for appearance sake but also to help keep the floors clean.

Lars' wife's spinning wheel was kept in her bedroom. The family gathered there in the evenings, especially in the winter. Lars would then tell bedtime stories - he knew lots of them - and would sing to the children. After the children had gone to their beds Lars would take his knitting while his wife would do her carding or spinning. A woman or older girl was hired to come in and sew for the wife and children, and a man tailor would make a suit for Lars. The dining table was used for cutting the cloth. All wore wooden shoes except

on Sunday for church.

Nine children came to Lars Haden and his wife, all born in the family home in Denmark. They were Mary, May 9, 1856; James, March 28, 1858; Maria, October 21, 1860; Andrew, January 22, 1864; Laura, December 29, 1866; Carl, July 19, 1869; Anna, December 7, 1871; Peter, August 23, 1874; and Ella, or Elvine, March 7 or 17, 1877. 42

When he was about 25 years old, Lars Haden fought in the Danish army in 1848-49. The fight was over the provinces of Schleswig and Holstein. The war was won by the Danes but the provinces were lost to Prussia in 1864. The main battles in which he was engaged were fought at Isted and Frederitia. These two won for him a silver bow and a Maltese Cross. The greatest honor and recognition was his being made a knight by the King of Denmark. At the end of the war two men were selected from each regiment and were made knights because of their outstanding service. This was quite an honor for Lars and one which gave him a number of prerogatives and privileges among the Danish people. The greatest benefit attached to knighthood was that the knight or his immediate posterity would never have to go to the poor house, and that meant quite a lot in such a poor country as Denmark was at that time. When he was 65 or 70 he received from the Danish government a pension of $20.00 or 40 kroner a year. During his army service Lars belonged to the artillery and rose to the rank of a petty officer immediately below the rank of lieutenant, and as such he was in full command of two cannons.

About this time Lars Haden had a change of name. Earlier he had gone by the name of Lars Christian Christianson, but now by a recommendation of the king the surname was changed to Haden, the name of his birthplace.

It was mentioned above that Lars' father-in-law had a good sized library. No doubt Lars made good use of it, as did his son James in the course of time. James, the oldest son, learned to read through books borrowed from the library, and this eventually led to the migration to America. James liked to read books dealing with America and decided to go there if he could. Lars then set aside for him a piece of land where James could raise his own patch of potatoes to sell. In his spare time he gathered up rocks from their own and a neighbor's farm. With a sledge hammer he broke them up into small pieces and sold them to a highway caretaker on the King's Way. Thus at the age of 18 he earned his

fare to the United States, arriving here in April 1876.

The next year Mary and Maria, 21 and 17, started from Denmark on April 3. They left a two-week old sister, Ella, behind. The girls were taken to Hjerring by team, then by train to Aalberg, and from there to Copenhagen by boat. They spent two or three days there waiting for a boat to Hamburg in order to avoid traveling on the North Sea, which was very rough, and in that time saw quite a bit of the city. They fortunately saw the king and queen in their carriage, drawn by four horses. The boat from Copenhagen to Hamburg was a sailing vessel but the large one from Hamburg was a steamer. They were 13 days crossing the Atlantic which was sometimes quite rough. Mary was very ill all the way but Maria had a wonderful time and enjoyed the trip. They arrived in Wisconsin on May 1, and there joined James.

The rest of the family arrived in June 1879. They braved the North Sea, stopping a day or two in Glasgow, Scotland. One morning the children went out for a stroll and all came back but Anna, who was 7½. There was great consternation. The family all scattered to look for her, but in a short time a policeman came bringing her along. He knew by her dress and language that she evidently was an immigrant.

The main part of the family went to Simpson, Minnesota, to the Whitney farm, then rented by George Light. They soon located on the S.H. Brown farm, across a creek and south of the Whitney farm. Simpson, platted in 1890, is in Pleasant Grove township in Olmsted County whose county seat is Rochester. The three older children joined them there and the family lived there until the following March, when they took their homestead in Brookings County. Lars and his wife spent the remainder of their years on that farm and in the village of White, which was established in 1884 when the Rock Island Railroad built its line through the county. Karen died on July 6, 1913 at the age of 78 years, 1 month and 2 days. Lars died on January 9, 1918 at the age of 95 years and 14 days. They and a number of their children were buried in the cemetery at White.

(Most of the information about Lars Haden and his family was supplied by Mrs. Harold Healy of Mapleton, Minn. Lucy was the daughter of Mary Haden Whitney, daughter of Lars Haden. Much of what is recorded of the Hadens' life in Denmark would probably be typical of many of the families who emigrated to the Argo area.)

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

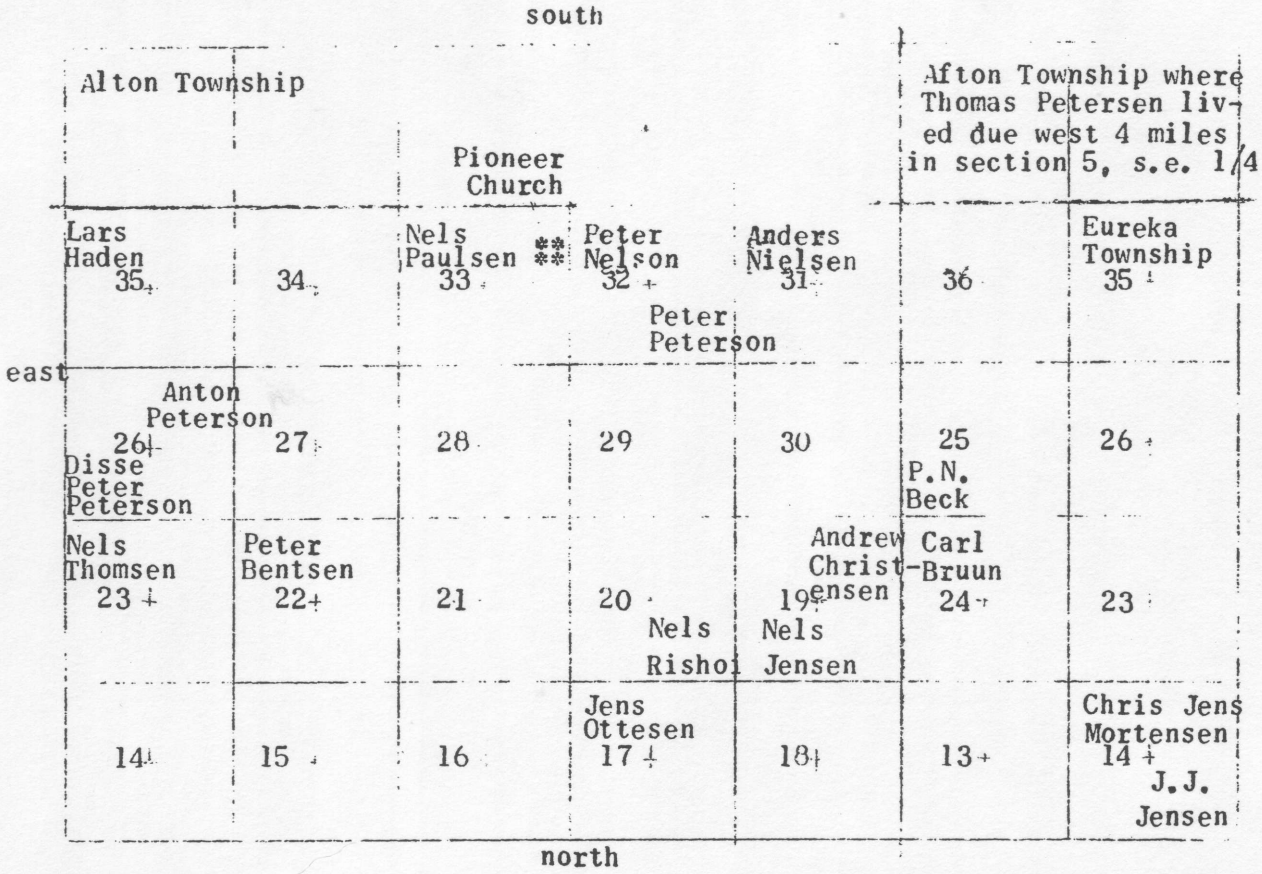
Mrs. Jens Peter Jensen is the oldest living member of the Pioneer Church. Annie was born in Denmark on June 7, 1885 and came to the United States at the age of seven with her parents, Andrew Christensen and wife. She has attended the Pioneer Church since 1892. On June 7, 1908 she married Jens P. Jensen, who was born on April 28, 1885 in Vrenstad, Denmark, and came to this country in 1903. He lived in Iowa for four years and then, still single, moved to Brookings County. He and his wife now live in White. In 1949 they donated two altar candelabra to the church. Jens joined the church in 1908 and Annie's parents also attended it. The Jensens had three children, two of whom are now living, namely Leonard Alvin Jensen and Harlof Harvey Jensen.

A new electric organ was installed in the church and used for the first time in the Christmas service in 1959. It was the gift of Mr. George Madsen, the Ladies Aid, the Coffee Club, Mrs. Elsie Nelsen, the pastor, and a few others.

Mr. James M. Rishoi, at the request of the author, has furnished some information about the changes of family names among those of the older generations. About 1845 the Danish king decreed, by recommendation only, that a child be given the father's surname. This was then followed quite generally by urban residents, but the decree was seldom followed among rural residents who continued, as before, to give the child the father's first name with -sen added. Thus a child of Soren became Sorensen; of Peter, Petersen; of Jens, Jensen. This was a cause of confusion in church records which in Denmark are official records.

About 1865 another decree stated that all children should be christened and given their father's first or given name with -sen added. This parctice was followed until about 1880 when the law was changed to provide that a child's surname should be the same as the father's surname. This has since been the law and is followed in general. Some names as used by Danes are the names of farms or estates; Haden, for example.

Because of these name changes in the middle of the 1800s some of the early Pioneer Church members had different surnames, though they all had the same parents. To illustrate: Jens P.M. Petersen had three children: Peter Jensen, Thomas Petersen, and Maria Jensen, all single when they arrived in this country. Maria Jensen shortly married Niels Rishoi.



Map showing the homesteads of some of the early Danish families who went to the Pioneer Church. None lived in Alton Township; one lived in Afton Township. Several lived in Eureka Township, but most lived in the south half of Argo Township. The Pioneer Church is located in the southwest quarter of Section 33, shown by 4 stars. This map was made late in 1959 from the recollections of older members of the church and by their descendants. The Brookings County Register of Deeds' office might show discrepancies and would reveal still other names of homesteaders of the early years.